



May 20, 2005

To: Directors of Enrollment Management, Financial Aid and Admissions  
Participating Colleges and Universities

From: Student Services Division

Subject: Early Graduation Guidelines

CC: Directors of Guidance at Public and Private South Carolina High Schools  
Presidents of South Carolina Home School Associations

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

EXPIRATION DATE: Indefinitely

### **Purpose**

To advise institutions that the Commission on Higher Education has implemented the use of an Early Graduation Application Form for the LIFE Scholarship and SC HOPE Scholarship Programs. This form has been implemented to allow students who complete all high school graduation requirements prior to their official graduation date in May/June to be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship or SC HOPE Scholarship, if they meet all initial and general eligibility criteria.

### **Application Process**

A copy of the Early Graduation Form is enclosed and may be copied as needed. The form is also available on the Commission on Higher Education's website at [www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov). Please inform all students who are requesting to receive the LIFE or SC HOPE Scholarship that they must complete the Early Graduation Form and return it along with an official letter from the high school principal, an official high school transcript, and SAT/ACT scores in one packet to the Commission on Higher Education by mail before their request can be processed. Upon review of the completed application, the Commission will notify the student and the institution of the rendered decision. **All applications must be received by March 1.**

(over)

## **Types of students**

### **Classified as a Degree-seeking Student**

Early graduates who enroll mid-year (spring term or equivalent) and are classified as degree-seeking will automatically begin their initial college enrollment. To receive the LIFE scholarship in the spring, students must meet the 3.0 cumulative GPA and 1100 SAT/24 ACT score in addition to the general eligibility criteria for first-time entering freshmen. Class rank can not be used to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship as an early graduate. To receive the HOPE Scholarship in the spring, students must meet the initial and general eligibility criteria for first-time entering freshmen. Students must also seek approval from CHE by completing the Early Graduation Application Form to receive either scholarship.

### **Classified as a Special Student**

Early graduates who enroll mid-year (spring term or equivalent) and are classified as special students will not begin their initial college enrollment for purposes of the LIFE or SC HOPE Scholarship Programs. It is not necessary for special students to complete the Early Graduation Application Form. In order to determine eligibility upon the student's official high school graduation in May/June, the student must meet the initial and general eligibility criteria for first-time entering freshmen.

## **Questions**

If you have any questions regarding this directive, please contact Sandra Rhyne, LIFE Scholarship Program Coordinator, at (803) 737-2280 or [srhyne@che.sc.gov](mailto:srhyne@che.sc.gov), Karen Wham, SC HOPE Scholarship Program Coordinator at (803) 737-4544 or [kwham@che.sc.gov](mailto:kwham@che.sc.gov), or Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director of Student Services, at (803) 737-2244 or [kwoodfaulk@che.sc.gov](mailto:kwoodfaulk@che.sc.gov).